

LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA (LPA)  
Scrapbook

District 5 1984-1986

Creator: Vito Zella



**VITO ZELLA**  
**b. 1952 – d. 1994**

This eulogy appeared in the Sept. – Dec. 1994 issue of LPA Today. Rick Eames was editor.

Dear Rick:

The following is the letter I told you I would like to write on behalf of my dear friend Vito Zella. It's been hard to put all the feelings I have toward him into words. He was a wonderful friend and I will really miss him.

On July 5, 1994, the LPA community lost one of its finest, Mr. Vito Zella. At age 52 he died of heart failure. He lived in Dayton, Ohio and was one of seven children. Vito had been one of the first members of LPA. He attended the second convention, (1960 in Las Vegas, Nev.). This would be the beginning of a new life for Vito. From then on he attended most every national and regional he could. It was at one of these regionals that I had the pleasure of meeting him. We soon became fast friends.

Vito was the type of man who always wanted to help people out and be a friend to everyone. He was very dedicated to LPA and had many, many friends. He lived from one regional or national to another because he enjoyed being with everyone so much.

This past April I wrote him to invite him to our district regional. Even though we had kept in touch over the years, I hadn't seen Vito since 1987. I was thrilled when he called to say he could come. Now, I could finally introduce him to my husband and daughter. We had a great weekend and promised that we wouldn't wait seven years to see one another again. I didn't know then how much that weekend would end up meaning to me. For, you see, it was to be our last time together. Vito passed away right before the San Antonio Conference.

I'm sure many of you have special memories of him and grieve the loss just as I do. His sister wanted me to thank everyone for their kind acts during the family's loss. She really appreciates the many friends he had and for making his life so special.

On a closing note, I'd like to tell you what my four year old daughter said after learning of his death. She said "You know what mamma? Heavens got another little people angel." Through the tears I had to laugh.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bowen



## D.L. Stewart Off The Bear

has a growth deficiency. And vision problems. And a learning disability.

So I drive to Melinda's house and her mother answers the door and leads me inside and introduces me to her daughter.

Being told that she has a growth deficiency does not prepare me for the tiny little person who is Melinda. She is 21 years old, but she is no bigger than my 8-year-old, who is just about the smallest kid in his class.

When she was born, Melinda was 19 inches long and weighed six pounds. A year later, she still weighed six pounds. At the age of 3, she could not lift her head. With the help of costly hormone injections, her motor skills and her growth were stimulated. She is now 3-foot-7. Some day, her father says, she may be 4-feet tall.

**WE DRIVE** downtown, Melinda and I, talking a lot but saying very little, which is usually the way it is with strangers.

Mostly Melinda likes to talk about what time it is, drawing obvious pride from the fact that she can tell time. But she likes to talk about school, too. She is a 10th grader now and she enjoys school so much, she says, that she wishes it would last until 6 o'clock every night.

At Courthouse Square, I play in a volleyball exhibition while Melinda sits and drinks a Coke and watches. It is cold and blustery and I suggest to her that she might be more comfortable waiting inside one of the buildings that surround the square. But Melinda stays outside. She is con-

cerned that, if she goes inside, I might not be able to find her.

After the volleyball we walk to my office. Several times along the way I have to remind myself to slow down. When you're 3-foot-7, it takes a lot more steps to get where you're going. As we cross the street, I find myself reaching down to hold her hand.

At the office, Melinda drinks another Coke and several people stop to talk with her, most of them unaware of who she is or why she is with



Melinda

me. Almost everyone asks her how old she is. When she says 21, the questions usually end and there is an uncomfortable silence.

Later, we drive to Channel 2, where I have an appearance to tape. While we wait for the cameraman to set up, Melinda meets Kris Long and Art Brown, who stop their work and spend several minutes talking with her.

"Wasn't that nice, meeting them?" I ask Melinda later.

"Yes," she says. "What do they do?"

From Channel 2 I take Melinda to my house to meet my family. The 8-year-old is watching television when we arrive, but he looks up when I introduce Melinda.

"How old are you?" he asks her.

"Twenty-one," she says.

"Gosh," he says. He returns his attention to the television.

**EVENTUALLY**, I take Melinda home and I thank her parents for letting us spend the day together.

Driving back home, I think about the day past. It was a nice day, a pleasant day, but not the kind of day I had expected. Nothing happened that was dramatic or unusual or poignant. Nothing happened that was worth writing about.

Spending a day with a handicapped child was pretty much like spending a day with any other child. Melinda has some physical limitations, sure, but basically she is just the same as any other kid.

So the whole day, the whole program, was really sort of a waste of time.

Unless, of course, that was the point of it all.

## Last week, he spent a day with Melinda

Melinda is a tiny little thing, with light brown hair cut short and a happy smile that flits across her face on those occasional moments when she has nothing to say.

Her proudest possession right now is her digital wrist watch, which she consults every few minutes, announcing aloud the time in a voice that is no bigger than her body.

She got the watch on March 27. That was her birthday. Her 21st.

We met last week, Melinda and I.

It was Exceptional Children's Week and a number of local politicians and news media people agreed to spend part of a day with a handicapped child. The idea was that the kids would have some new experiences and the politicians and news media people would gain some insight into what it is to be handicapped.

When the woman coordinating the program contacts me to see if I will be a part of it, I agree, because I can't imagine having a schedule filled with things so important that there is no room on it for a handicapped child.

"Are there any types of handicaps that would bother you?" the woman asks. "Honest. We don't want to assign someone to you who would make you feel uncomfortable."

"Bother me? No, nothing that I can think of," I say. And, even as I say it, I am hoping deep inside that the kid she assigns to me doesn't look all twisted and doesn't make weird faces when he tries to talk. Or, worse, I hope he doesn't drool. What I'm hoping for, I guess, is a kid who's just a little bit handicapped. In a cute sort of way. Like the kids on the posters.





1984  
 SPRING  
 REGIONAL  
 IN CLEVELAND  
 OHIO  
MAY 4, 5, 6.





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MOVIE (CC)  
9 PM 14 15 48

VITO  
July 18  
1984  
Wednesday



#### LITTLE PEOPLE

Little People of America is a national organization founded in 1957 to help dwarfs, or "little people," as they refer to themselves. According to Lee Kitchens, its former president, you won't "find very many [members] that are feeling sorry for themselves." And you won't find any in this 1982 film, which includes scenes of the LPA's 1981 convention.

At that Minnesota conclave, little people gathered for sports activities, fashion shows, entertainment and, most important, interaction with others like themselves. There (and in other locales) they poignantly—and at times humorously—discuss some of the social and physical problems they encounter,

such as the great risks involved in having children. They maintain positive outlooks, but painful memories of isolation, ridicule and plain inconvenience sometimes emerge. One 11-year-old says: "There are some advantages to being little, but not too many. There's, like, when you play hide-and-seek. It's a lot easier to hide."

Presented without narration, the film was produced and directed by Jan Krawitz and Thomas Ott. (60 min.)

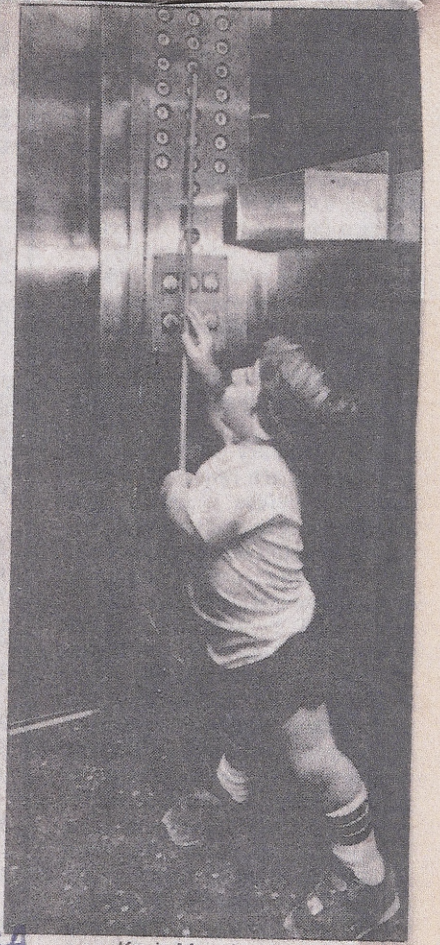
Dayton Edition

TV GUIDE A-91



July 20 27 1984 MARRIOTT  
HOTEL  
Pavilion in Down St Louis





3A Kevin Manning/Post-Dispatch

### Little People

At left, Nancy Stewart of Monroeville, Ala., hugs her family and friends from Des Moines, Iowa, outside the Marriott Pavilion Hotel. They are here for the Little People of America's convention, which starts today. Above, Mark Trombino, 16, of Phoenix, Ariz., uses a pool cue in a hotel elevator to reach his floor.

14A

JULY 24 1984 Tuesday ST LOUIS POST DISPATCH



### Team Spirit

Robert LaRouche/Post-Dispatch

Members of the Little People of America show their competitive spirit during a softball game Monday afternoon

at Busch Stadium. They are here this week for the group's annual convention.



## Little People To Meet Here — And It's No Small Feat

By Victor Volland  
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

What do you say to a very short person? For one thing, you definitely shouldn't refer to him or her as a midget.

"That's typecasting. Average-sized people then assume we're all actors, midget wrestlers or clowns," complained Donna Burnett, a St. Louis teacher who is one of the hosts and organizers of the Little People of America's convention that opens here Monday.

About 1,000 members were registering this weekend for the weeklong gathering at the Marriott Pavilion Hotel.

The term dwarf is OK because dwarfism is the correct medical term for the condition that prevents one from growing taller than 4 feet 10 inches, said Karen Schreiner, another local organizer. "Little" or "short-statured" are the preferred terms, she said.

One of every 8,000 Americans is a dwarf; about 300 or 400 live in St. Louis. They work in as many jobs and professions as average-sized people do, said Mrs. Schreiner, a medical technician.

"We didn't say 'normal-sized' because, after all, what is normal?" said Gail Keup, a medical transcriptionist and south St. Louis resident.

Changing attitudes as well as physical barriers in the "average" world are part of the purpose of the convention. The other part involves providing support in adjusting to that other world through workshops on employment, education, marriage and adoption.

Counters bug little people the most, followed by drinking fountains, elevator buttons and other workaday objects that in effect are out of reach of those less than 5 feet tall.

But more troublesome and

heart-rending are the mental and emotional attitudes and reactions of "big people."

"They either avoid us or get flustered and don't know how to act around us, or else they treat you like a child because you look to them like a child," Ms. Burnett said.

Adults often are rude to children because they're smaller and defenseless, and are likewise rude and thoughtless to little people, observed Betty Binkley of Cedar Hill. "They'll just walk in front of you or run into you without apologizing," said Mrs. Binkey, who stands 3 feet 7 inches tall. "You really have to have a sense of humor and think positive." Her husband, Tom, is 5 feet 2 inches tall. They have two average-sized teen-age children.

Being very short can have advantages, too.

"You get pampered and special attention," Ms. Burnett said. "You get remembered. You're going to get attention so you may as well use it."

As if to demonstrate, Ms. Burnett interrupted the interview long enough to spot, hug and take a photograph with Missouri Attorney General John D. Ashcroft, who was passing through the hotel lobby. She met Ashcroft when he came to talk at her church eight years ago, and has "bumped into" him occasionally since then. "He always remembers me because of my size," Ms. Burnett said.

Little people have to learn to accept themselves as they are in their own small world and then to adapt and adjust to the larger world, she and the others agreed.

"We can be just about anything we want to be — except maybe an airline stewardess or a few other jobs where a minimum height is required," she said. "And, of course, we can't very well go into a life of crime. The cops would spot us for sure."

St. Louis Post Dispatch

Sunday, Sep 9, 1984



# World's 1st Dwarf Twins Born to Dwarf Parents — Mom's Own Story

Suzanne Was, 21, and her husband Joe, 31 — both dwarfs — made medical history when they became the parents of dwarf twins who look identical. But the threat of tragedy hung over the San Antonio, Tex., couple during Suzanne's pregnancy — she had a 1-in-4 chance of losing her babies to a deadly genetic disorder. Here, exclusively for ENQUIRER readers, 51-inch-tall Suzanne tells how she and 54-inch-tall Joe coped with the agonizing ordeal.

By SUZANNE WAS

"It's so unfair ... don't let my precious babies die," I prayed desperately as I lay in a hospital maternity ward.

My husband Joe and I are both dwarfs, and even before I became pregnant with twins last year I knew one dreadful fact: There was a good chance that any baby we had would inherit a deadly combination of genes and die shortly after birth.

"Have we unwittingly condemned our babies to death — just by wanting them so much?" I agonized.

"Don't think about it," I told myself. "Just think of the best happening. Don't worry — think about something happy." In-

## I Lived in Terror — There Was a 1-in-4 Chance My Babies Would Die at Birth

side my womb, my twins stirred restlessly. They seemed anxious to be born, to meet their adoring mother and father.

They had no way of knowing the horrible truth — that they might be doomed even before their tiny lives began.

"Dear God," I begged, "please let my babies live!"

I managed a faint smile as I remembered the day 15 months earlier when Joe and I met — and fell madly in love. We were married just 17 days later, and five months after that I was pregnant with twins.

"Thank You, Lord, for making my happiness complete," I prayed — but behind my joy was a dark cloud. I knew that since both Joe and I are dwarfs, there was a 1-in-4 chance that our children would inherit both his dwarf genes and mine — a condition called "double dominance." If that happened, their lungs would almost certainly be too small. Our babies would probably die.

But we couldn't find out if they were doomed until they were born!

Joe was my tower of strength. Many times when he saw the tears of worry welling in my eyes, he'd take me in his arms and hold me close without a word.

"I can't wait for them to be born," I'd sob. "I can't wait to see how they're going to turn out."

Day after day I'd try to push my fears out of my



**PROUD PARENTS:** A supermarket worker towers over Joe and Suzanne as they show off the twins.

## Their First Cries Were Music To My Ears — The Long Months Of Worry and Fear Were Over

mind — but then they'd come rushing back out of the blue, and my heart would skip a beat with dread.

My fears grew when the doctor told me our twins would be dwarfs. I checked every source I could find, and there was no record anywhere of a dwarf couple giving birth to dwarf twins.

Worry haunted me like a ghost during the long weeks that followed. I'd wake up at night terrified and sweating. Finally, on

February 7 my doctor decided to perform a cesarean.

"Please, Lord, let them be all right," I begged as I sank into a haze of anesthesia.

Suddenly I awoke to the sound of two babies yelling loudly.

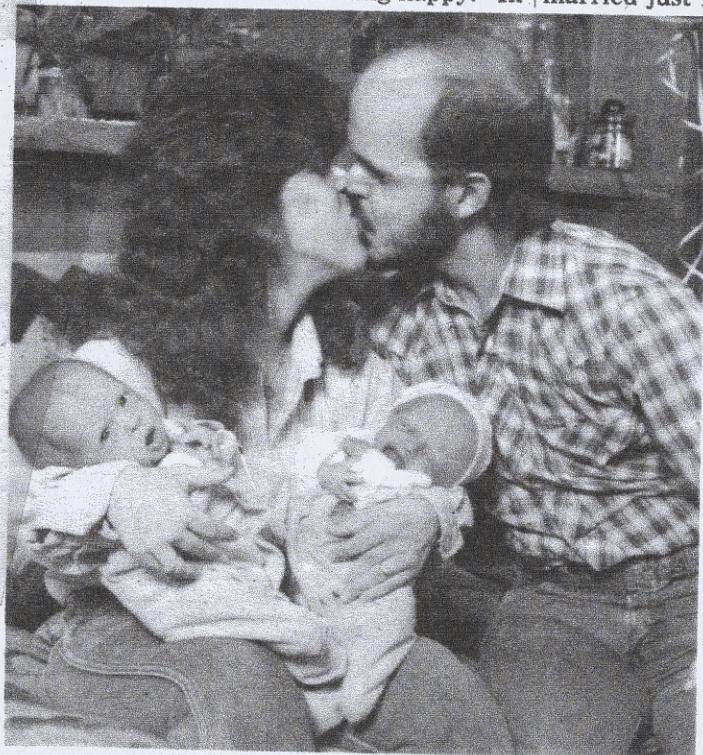
The screeching sound was music to my ears.

"There's nothing wrong with those lungs!" I thought. "We've missed the double dominance!"

The long months of worry and fear were over. Our twin sons Joseph, who weighed 6 pounds 1½ ounces, and 4-pound 14½-ounce Jacob were fine!

"Thank You, Lord," I prayed as tears of joy rolled down my cheeks.

"Thank You for answering my prayers — and giving me my babies!"



**BUNDLES OF JOY:** Joe Was Sr. kisses wife Suzanne as twins Jacob (left) and Joe squirm on mom's lap.

*It is one thing to show a man that he is in error, and another to put him in possession of the truth.*

— John Locke

NATIONAL ENQUIRER

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# Neighbors

SECTION B APRIL 5 1985

THE MOUNTAIN PRESS-FRIDAY

*Wish you  
could have  
come to see  
us had so  
little people  
here*

## Little People learn to live in real world

By Mary O. Stone  
Special Writer

For most normal-size people, communicating with our peers in a normal-sized world is something we take for granted. For Eric Pullon and the other Little People of America, communicating with their peers in their own small world, is something they regard as a special privilege. Their meetings are a way to escape, for a little while, from a world where everything is out of reach.

It was a special occasion March 31 for 19-year-old Eric Pullon of Gatlinburg, because on that day, he hosted (with his parents) a meeting of his peers — the Little People of America — at Glenstone Lodge.

Little People came from as close as Maryville to as far away as Flint, Mich., to have fun, to discuss their mutual problems, and to share their individual solutions.

It was for these reasons that the Little People of America (LPA) was established 28 years ago. Its membership is open to anyone who is 4-feet and 10-inches tall, or under.

Many adult members are in the 2-foot tall range. Parents and siblings are accepted as associate members.

District Five director Marge Carlisle, who is 4-feet and 1-inch tall, explains: "One of the goals of LPA, is to help us to live in two worlds, our own small world and the real world. I enjoy my time with the Little People, but I still have to go back to the other world because that's where we have to live on a day-to-day basis."

Living in a world where almost everything is out of reach isn't easy, but Little People find ingenious ways to cope. In order to drive a car, they have devised portable pedal extensions which can be quickly and easily attached to any car. "On those occasions when I fly, I fold up my pedal extensions and carry them in my briefcase, so I can drive a rented car," said Dan Turner who was one of the charter members of LPA.

Meetings at hotels pose many problems for Little People. One lady carries a telescoping radio antenna in her purse so she can push buttons in elevators.

Little People don't like round tables for two reasons. "We ask the management to just seat eight at a round table which normally seats 10," Rasa said. "We need a little bit of room to slide up into the chair. Once we're in the chair, we can't scoot it up because our feet aren't on the floor."

"The other thing is — we always have to ask waitresses to set the condiments beside a plate instead of in the center of the table where none of us can reach them. These are things that are not right or wrong, it's just that people don't think of them from our point of view."



At the meeting: Dan Turner and Eric Pullon.

Mary Stone

Grocery shopping is another troublesome area where Little People need help. "If you're going to go out and about much, you

**We can do practically anything. Our brains are as big as anybody's so we use our brains instead of our bodies.**  
...LPA member

fessions — lawyers, accountants, administrators, truck drivers, registered nurses, office workers. "We can do practically anything. Our brains are as big as anybody's so we use our brains instead of our bodies," said longtime LPA member Joe Heideman who drives a fork lift as part of his job as maintenance man in a machine shop.

"The biggest problem is getting a job. A lot of places will tell you that you can't do the job because of your size. I've been through that. I've been turned down by a lot of places when I knew I could do the work if they'd just give me a chance. I got the job I have now, because I knew somebody that worked there. I've been there 27 years and intend to stay there until I retire."

certainly have to get past the point of being embarrassed or shy about asking a total stranger for help," Rasa said. "You just say 'Please reach that for me,' or 'Hand that to me.' Then you thank them and go on."

There are Little People in almost all pro-



# Little man's future big

Continued from Page 1-C.

If Caldwell's first year in the sport was any indication, Pacifico's feeling will be right.

Last November, after training with Pacifico for just five months, the Northridge High School product captured the 114-pound class at the Mountaineer Open in Huntington, W.Va. He benched 197 pounds; dead-lifted 253; squatted 330 for a 780 total. "You can't believe how excited I was," Caldwell said. "It was at that meet that I realized maybe I had what it took for this sport."

In February, Caldwell experienced his first failure. "It was at the Ohio State Championships," he explained. "The tournament didn't have a special squat bar for me. I had a difficult time adjusting to the bar." In three attempts, the 24-year-old failed to make a good lift.

"There are some who might have let that meet get to 'em," Pacifico said. "But Jim just seemed to work harder. We fixed him a bar made specially for him."

With the shorter bar, Caldwell won the American Cup in Sandusky, lifting 905 pounds, and he was ready for his biggest test — the Junior Nationals in Washington, D.C. "I was scared," Caldwell said. "I was just hoping to perform well."

At first it appeared Caldwell's dreams were going to be vetoed.

He missed his first two squat attempts at 380 pounds, but his coach wasn't concerned. "It was so frustrating," Pacifico said. "I knew he could lift the weight. He was just nervous. I told the officials to raise the weight from 380 to 402, but, of course, I didn't tell Jim. I knew that would just give him more to worry about."

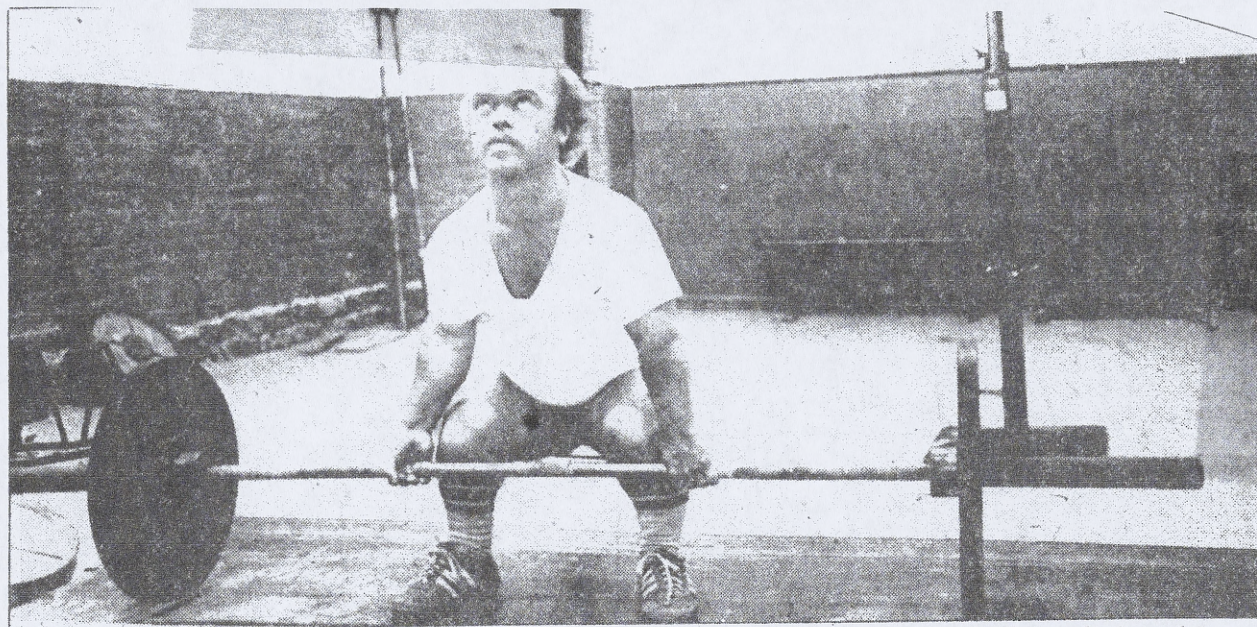
Caldwell lifted the added weight easily, according to Pacifico. "In fact, he could have lifted 500 pounds," he said. Caldwell's three-lift total was 960 pounds, a 180-pound improvement over nine months earlier.

"I can't believe how much progress he has made in such short period," Pacifico said. "He is still young (24) and you can lift in this sport until you are in your late 40's and early 50's. When I tell people I have someone who can lift 900 pounds after their first year, nobody believes me."

Caldwell said he plans to compete in two or three meets this year preparing for the 1986 Senior Nationals, scheduled for June 28-29 at the Dayton Convention Center. "I would love to win the nationals here in front of the home people," Caldwell said. "I think I can win the nationals."

Then Pacifico interrupted, "You will win more than the nationals," he said. "And you will travel the world and become a (world) champion."

That would be quite an adventure for a man who used to walk to first most of the time.



Staff photo by Crystal Carney

Jim Caldwell, only 4-6, works out in private powerlift session

## Mighty

### Little man's future big in powerlifting

By RICK MCCRABB  
Sports Special Writer

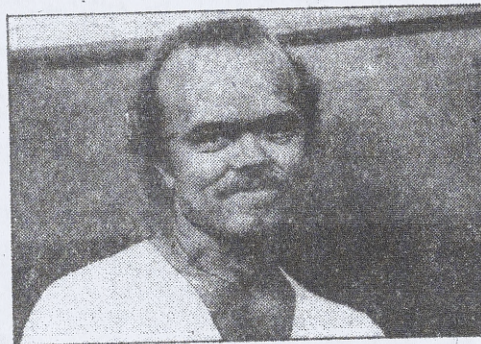
Jim Caldwell isn't an average powerlifter. In a sport filled with oversized Arnold Schwarzeneggers, Caldwell is a 4-foot-5, 114-pound dwarf.

Up until last year, he was just a weekend softball player, who, on occasion, would powder a few balls over unsuspecting outfielders' heads. But what Caldwell seemed to do most, of course, was walk. "And there ain't much glory in walking," he said.

But that was prior to his chance meeting with Daytonian Larry Pacifico, a nine-time world powerlifting champion.

"I was walking out of Casa Lupita with a friend (Greg Millsaps)," Caldwell explained about the July night. "And this real big guy who was walking in, asked me, 'How much do you weigh?' The guy was so big, I didn't know whether to answer his question or give him my wallet. I said, 'Between 115 and 120.' He said he wanted me to try out for his weightlifting team. I couldn't believe it."

"That guy turned out to be Larry Pacifico. I had heard of him, but I didn't know him. You should have seen the look on my friend's face. He



Staff photo by Crystal Carney

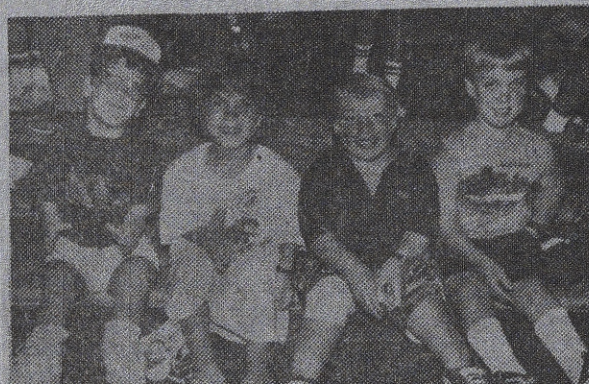
#### Mighty mite Jim Caldwell

was a big Pacifico fan. That's all we talked about on the way home. He couldn't believe Larry Pacifico was interested in me."

Pacifico said he was more than just interested in Caldwell. "As soon as I saw him, I could tell he had a future in powerlifting," Pacifico said. "I could see his muscular structure. I just had a feeling about him."

See LITTLE MAN'S, Page 9-C.





## Sociales

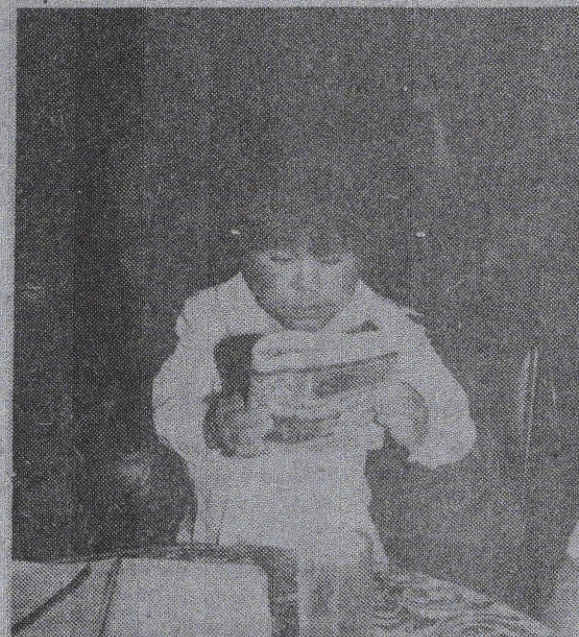
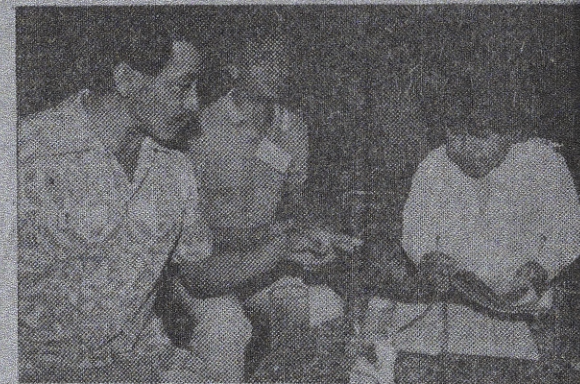
### Exitosa la exhibición de modas de la Gente Pequeña de América

Dentro de los eventos de familiarización que se organizan dentro de la Primera Convención Internacional de Gente Pequeña de América, destaca el desfile de modas que se celebró ayer, en un salón del hotel Posada Vallarta, sitio sede del evento. El desfile fue presentado por Mary Carter, y las modelos fueron los propios asistentes al evento social.

Las guapas modelos lucieron vestuario de noche y ropas para diversos climas; desde el pantalón corto hasta la blusa ligera de algodón.

Este evento resultó lucido y de gran ambiente, en donde además se contó con la presencia de Hervé Villechaize "TATOO".

La reunión de los integrantes del grupo de la Gente Pequeña de América se vio muy animada con la presencia de personajes célebres del cine y la televisión como este Hervé Villachaise a quien muchos conocen por su participación en la serie de tele-





## Small in beautiful

by: Miguel Angel  
INFANTE Sharon  
VAN BRAMER

The Little People of America have chosen Puerto Vallarta as the seat of their 1985 national conventional; they arrived 'en masse' Friday July 19th and report that the first thing they were made aware of was the kind nature of the 'natives' and the warm hospitality. That certainly is a welcome and flattering first assessment of our town!

Frist to arrive and thus be on hand to welcome the rest of the  
Please see page 2



MR. NICK de la Valle, president of the Little People of America, he and the are in town until July 26th for their 1985 national convention. Welcome! (Photo by J. Escobedo).



El famoso actor de la televisión Hervé Villechaize vino a Vallarta para asistir a la reunión internacional de la "Gente Pequeña" y aquí con su ejemplar de NUEVO DIA, mientras es entrevistado. (Foto Escobedo NUEVO DIA).



The Little People of America Annual Convention runs through July 26. at the Posada Vallarta.

## Little People

By: Sharon VAN BRAMER  
Miguel Angel INFANTE

The number of individuals attending the Little People of America Annual Convention here in Puerto Vallarta went up by one today when the group welcomed one of its most famous members, world-renowned actor of TV and screen Hervé "Tattoo" Villachaize.

The welcome given the star of "Fantasy Island" (from which his nickname derives) was lavish, or at least more than the gentleman and his lovely French escort expected.



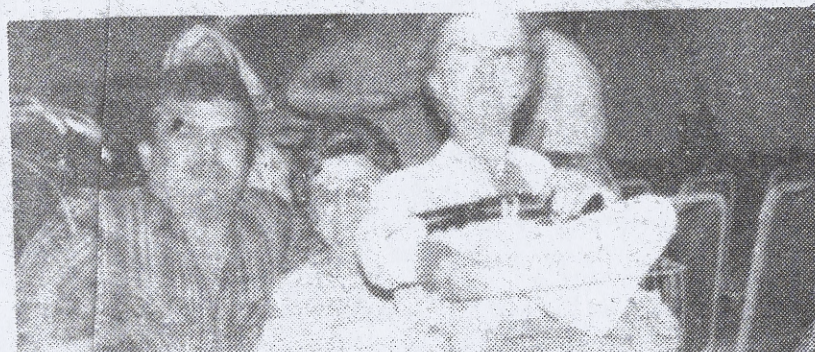
# La Gente Pequeña se divierte bien en Vallarta



Coctel celebrado en el salón Jalisco del hotel Posada Vallarta



:Grupo "México" de Gente Pequeña de América



Franc Billington, Lulise y señor David Fennimore, pequeños provenientes de Tes.



Randy de Nueva York, Ammy de Miami, Felicidades, Randy



Bailando estos grandes pequeños.



Terry Lommiki de Chicago y Ken Latimer de Kansas



## Finalizó la Primera Convención de Gente Pequeña

En un ambiente lleno de sentimientos de fraternidad y amistad se clausuró ayer la Primera Convención Internacional de Gente Pequeña de América, que agrupó a más de quinientas personas de países de Europa, Norte y Sur América. Durante la ceremonia de clausura los convencionistas recibieron reconocimientos de la CANACO y del Presidente Na-

cional de Ciudades Hermanas de México; por haber escogido Puerto Vallarta, como ciudad sede.

En la misma reunión con lo que se dió por cerrada esta primera reunión internacional de gente de pequeña estatura, los organizadores por medio de sus directivos, entregaron presentes y diplomas a varios de los participantes. En los documen-

tos entregados se señala como activos miembros de Little People of America.

Robert Van E., Presidente de la Organización Internacional, al hacer uso de la palabra dijo a los asistentes que esta reunión sirvió para ayudar a las gentes de estatura pequeña, para que se sientan bien y se den cuenta que en el mundo hay más gentes iguales a ellos.

Otro aspecto que presentó fue el hecho de que antes de finalizar la convención todos los asistentes a una misma voz, cantaron la canción "Todos seamos Hermanos".

También se nombraron a las personas que destacaron por simpatía y colaboración, así como a la princesa y príncipe de la mencionada convención internacional.

## El sector turístico puede recibir impacto de los recortes presupuestarios

MEXICO, 26 de Julio (Notimex).- El sector turístico privado manifestó hoy su apoyo a la Secretaría de Turismo para la consolidación del desarrollo de la industria, que puede sufrir modificaciones por el recorte presupuestal.

La Asociación Mexicana de Agencias de Viajes, de hoteles y moteles y del sector restaurantero resaltaron las medidas adoptadas por la administración pública federal, pero señalaron que el sector turístico requiere del apoyo federal para mantener su crecimiento y sostenerse como segunda fuente generadora de divisas.

El sector turístico privado informó que está a la espera de los señalamientos que en breve dará a conocer el Secretario de Turismo, Antonio Enriquez Sa-

vignac ante la cancelación de la subsecretaría de Planeación de Turismo y el recorte presupuestal que afectará a la dependencia.

El ahorro que el gobierno capte en el pre-

sente año por la reducción de empleados públicos debe ser canalizado a gastos productivos para apoyar entre otros sectores, a la industria turística, que ha demostrado ser la

Para la Página 7



CONCLUYO ANOCHE la convención internacional de las "Personas Pequeñas de América", con un gran baile en donde se nombraron a los reyes de la reunión.

## Reagan a favor de la Simpson-Mazzoli





JULY 30 BY 1985 -





OCT 4-5-6 1985  
IN Columbus Ohio



Pam may be small, but she feels she can tackle just about anything. "My life isn't that different from yours," she says. "I just have to do things a little differently and approach them from another angle."



by Pam Sabourin as told to Coralee Michelucci

When I was growing up, my one ambition was to enter a beauty pageant, just as my sister had. But I was discreetly discouraged by my family. They thought it inappropriate. They told me I could never become a beauty queen because I'm a dwarf—and only 4' 3".

I know they were just trying to protect me from being disappointed by the outcome, but the truth stung. When I was a child, my parents had always encouraged me to do the same things my normal-size sister did. Suddenly, they were discouraging me from pursuing the one thing I'd always wanted: to be a beauty queen. It seemed so unfair.

I think that was the first time I felt like an outcast. Until then, I hadn't really noticed how different I was. Being a dwarf certainly wasn't a problem when I was very young. People thought my being pint-size was cute, so I got lots of attention. And most of my playmates were only a little bigger than I was.

By the time I entered the seventh grade, though, the picture had changed dramatically. My classmates suddenly shot up and left me behind—not just in size, but socially too. I was still popular, only I wasn't dating boys, and the other girls were. Sure, I was always asked along on group dates, but none of the boys at school ever asked me out individually.

Suddenly, everyone at school referred to me as "little sister Pam." Not being able to wear what the other girls did made me feel even

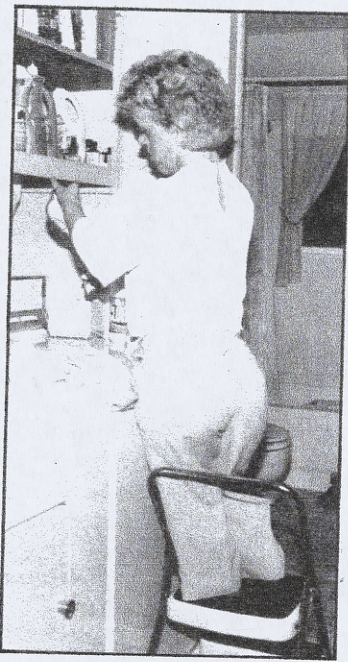
## High Hopes

more of an outsider. Of course, I could never find stylish clothes in my size. Most of my clothes came from the children's department, and I had to shorten everything. But I was determined to compensate for my size in other ways, by putting on a good face and by working harder. And I got involved in all kinds of activities at school.

Still, the heartache didn't go away. More than missing stylish clothes, I missed having boyfriends. I longed to go on a date, but I was convinced no one would ever fall in love with me. You are a dwarf, I'd say to myself. Who'd want to go out with you? So often I cried myself to sleep. Fortunately, my family was always there to provide moral support. I don't know how I'd have gotten through those years without them.

At 15, I found some solace in the Little People of America—a support group for people under 4' 11". I was amazed at how much more at home I felt with people my own size. And through the Little People, I also realized my dream of winning a pageant. At one of their conferences, I was elected their Teen Queen—an honor that gave me the opportunity to travel throughout the country.

I also met my first hus-



Pam always finds a way to overcome life's obstacles.

band through the Little People. Bob—it's not his real name, but I'll call him Bob—was a regular-size guy who had come to a convention with a little cousin. I was overwhelmed by all his attention—I had never dated anyone before. More importantly, my being little didn't seem to bother him in the least. We were married October 5, 1979, and settled in New Berlin, Illinois.

At first, trying to make



Pam relishes her roles as mother and wife, below, and as a cosmetics saleswoman, left.



## Turning POINT

There is nothing wrong with being a dwarf. You simply learn how to cope with it. Doing the laundry is a chore—I practically have to climb inside the machine to get all the clothes out. And everything I want always seems to be on the top shelves at the store, but I can always ask another shopper to hand me what I want. It's also difficult to drive a car, but there's always a way. We have step stools in every room, and if we need something from a kitchen cabinet, we stand on top of the kitchen counter. There's isn't anything we can't do!

Young children will often point at me and say, "Look at that little mommy!" I wish their mothers wouldn't pull them away. They should explain to their children why we are little. I'm never bothered by curious children—it's the adults who are sometimes unkind. But I've learned to deal with that.

That's why I think life will be easier for Heidi. I've gone through the things she will, so maybe I'll be able to help her. Brian and I will be adopting another dwarf child soon. If I could have 12 more kids I'd want them all to be little like me. That's because I finally found the strength to accept myself as I am. I think for that reason people started to accept me too.

Today, I love being a little person in a big world. I wish only that I'd woken up years ago and could be where I am now. The stroke damaged me physically... but the lesson it taught me has changed my life. I may be small, but I think big. With the love and support of my little family, I can realize all of my hopes and dreams... even the highest ones. ★

Has there been a turning point in your life? We invite you to share that experience with our readers and will pay \$250 for each story published. We require real names and permission to take photographs for publication. Write: Turning Point, *Woman's World*, Box 6700, Englewood, NJ 07631. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

**NEXT WEEK: A young woman lost her vision but gained the world.**

up for being so small, I spoiled Bob. I did everything for him. Then I had a daughter, Heidi, who's a little person like me, but she only compounded our problems. Now I had to put the baby first—and Bob just couldn't cope with that.

Soon after, Bob started abusing me, and the problem was made worse by my size. Bob could throw me across the room with no trouble at all. Sometimes he did it with such force, I was sure he would kill me. One night, while I was feeding my daughter in her high-chair, Bob got me in a strangle hold. And when Heidi wouldn't stop crying, he started shaking her. I was livid. "If you ever touch her again, I will kill you!" I screamed. But deep down, I felt helpless. I didn't know how to get out of the marriage. And I was afraid of being single again.

The breaking point came the day I suffered a stroke. I had gotten out of bed that August morning in 1983 and fallen flat on my face. When I couldn't move my right leg, I knew something was terribly wrong. Somehow, I managed to get up and go to work—I was afraid of losing my job. For the next two weeks, I con-

tinued to work. I simply refused to acknowledge the fact that at age 24, I had suffered a stroke.

My condition only worsened. I was referred to the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where doctors diagnosed my rare spinal stroke, which was connected to the spinal problems from which dwarfs suffer. The verdict wasn't optimistic. They didn't want to operate for fear of paralyzing my entire body.

Then my mother phoned me in the hospital with more bad news. "Bob has left," she said. She and my sister had been taking care of Heidi. "What am I going to do?" I asked her in despair. How was I going to support my child when I couldn't even take care of myself? Mother had no answers, but she reassured me nonetheless. "Dad and I will support you in whatever you want to do," she said.

After several weeks, I was sent home, tied to a wheelchair. There I was, only 24, my right side completely paralyzed, with responsibility for an infant daughter. I had been through a lot before and had always managed to keep fighting. But this was too much. For the first time in

my life, I was ready to give up. Secretly, I wished I would die.

But the more I sat around feeling sorry for myself, the angrier I became. I couldn't give up now when my daughter needed me. Finally, I summoned enough strength to do something to get back on course. I phoned the doctor who'd suggested I wear a "halo"—a painful neck and head brace. After wearing it for three months, I was able to walk, and my condition continued to improve. I had to learn to write and eat with my left hand, but I was starting to be myself again.

By the spring of 1984, I knew it was time to take control of my life once more. Even though my doctor discouraged me from getting a job, I started working part time as a saleswoman for Mary Kay products. It was rough at first, but I wanted to prove that I could do it. I also took Heidi to a regional Little People meeting and had a wonderful time.

The next month I became more courageous and drove eight hours to the national convention in Cleveland, where I met my second husband, Brian, a little person too. Brian phoned me every day for the next two weeks

and then asked me to marry him. He even moved to New Berlin to be closer to us.

I told Brian everything, about my stroke and my life with Bob. "I would never allow myself to be treated that way again," I said. I also explained how difficult life might be with me. "I can't do a lot of household chores. Sometimes it takes me a half-hour to get out of bed," I said. But even that didn't deter him.

"I love you," Brian assured me. "I'll support you no matter what happens." And he was as good as his word... we were married three months later.

At once, my life changed for the better. When I was alone, people's stares used to make me uncomfortable. But now, when I'm with my little family, I feel proud because I know we're special. I just wish I hadn't been so naive to think I'd be better off with a normal-size husband. There are many little people with such mates, but their spouses must be very compassionate people. I know I will never find a better husband than Brian. When my shoe falls off my weak foot in the middle of a store, he just sits down and helps me put it back on. He's never embarrassed to help.



## Dwarf Parents Tell About Their History-Making Dwarf Twins . . .

### Raising Children Is a Tall Order When You're Short

"I thank God every time I hear my sons say 'Mama,'" declared Suzanne Was, mother of the first dwarf twins ever born to dwarf parents.

"It reminds me of the miracle that brought them to me . . . and tells me how lucky I am."

In an ENQUIRER story last year, we told how Suzanne made medical history on Feb. 7, 1985, when she gave birth to her identical twin boys Jacob and Joseph in a San Antonio, Tex., hospital.

Although Jacob is a little smaller, strangers cannot tell them apart.

"But it's easy for us," their father Joe Sr. said. "They have different personalities. They even talk and cry differently. Jacob has a slightly higher-pitched voice."

Jacob, who weighed only 4 pounds 14½ ounces at birth, now stands 23¾ inches tall and weighs 18 pounds. His "big" brother Joseph, who weighed in at 6 pounds 1½ ounces at birth, now weighs 20 pounds and is ¼ inch taller than Jacob. Together, they're quite a handful for their mother Suzanne — who's only 4 feet 3 inches tall herself.

"The hardest thing is when they both cry and want to be picked up and comforted at the same time," she told The ENQUIRER.

"My arms are too short for me to hold them both together. I just can't manage it. And it really bothers me. I pick one up and cuddle him and in

### It's Hard When They Cry — My Arms Are Too Small to Hold Them Both!

my mind I imagine the other one thinking: 'She picked him up and not me. She loves him more.' It hurts, because I love them both so

much. So while I hold one, I comfort the other with my voice and reassure him that he's next. I think they're coming to accept that."

Because the twins crawl so fast and are so curious, Suzanne has to store everything high, out of their reach — and out of her own normal reach, as well.

"I solve that by using step stools to climb up on," she said.

The twins are mischievous in other ways, Suzanne said. When she tries to reach them in their cribs, they sometimes roll as far away from her as they can.

"I'm sure they're having a little chuckle to themselves as I climb up to get them."

Shopping is also a problem because Suzanne can't reach high enough to place the twins in the supermarket grocery cart, as most mothers do with their little children.

"So I push the shopping cart with one hand and pull the twins in their double stroller with my other hand," she explained.

Her husband Joe added: "They're worth all the hard work. We know that medically they're a miracle — the only dwarf twins born to dwarf parents. But to us they're more than that."

"They're our special gift from heaven."

— DAVID WRIGHT



**BIG JOB:** Grocery shopping is an ordeal for tiny 4-foot-3 Suzanne Was, the world's first dwarf mom to have dwarf twins. She has trouble pushing the cart — and pulling her one-year-old boys, Jacob and Joe Jr., in their double stroller.



**DOUBLE TAKE:** Daddy Joe's head barely comes to the top of the highchairs when he helps his two boys eat their meals.



**LITTLE HELPER:** One of the boys is always underfoot.





## Little people convene

### Dwarfs tell of concerns

By Dinah Eng  
News Staff Writer

Call them short. Call them dwarfs. But don't call them handicapped.

Stacie and Roger Pouliot of Warren are little people, or LPs, as they call themselves.

They are among an estimated 400 Michiganians who stand 4 feet, 10 inches or less, and whose height usually is related to the medical condition of dwarfism. There are an estimated 6,000 dwarfs nationwide.

This weekend, the Little People of America (LPA) are holding a regional convention at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn. The 4,000-member group, founded in 1957, offers fellowship and solutions to members' practical problems.

Those concerns of finding stylish clothes in small sizes, using services made for taller people and deciding whether to have children are confronted by the Pouliots, who met through the LPA.

Pouliot, 28, is secretary of the



NEWS PHOTO / CHARLES V. TINES

Please see **Dwarfs / 11A**

Roger and Stacie Pouliot at their home in Warren.



# 3-Foot, 48-Lb. Wife Says 6-Foot Hubby's a Gentle Giant

**It's the most miraculous marriage on earth!**

Deborah Galat is just three feet tall, weighs a mere 48 pounds and is so incredibly fragile that she's suffered more than 3,000 broken bones in her life — but her husband Ron is a strong, strapping 172-pound six-footer who could easily crush her to death with a simple hug.

He treats his precious wife with tender, loving care — carrying her around "like an eggshell." And together they share one of the most touching love stories ever told.

"I never thought love could be like this. I'm constantly amazed that this big strong man has chosen me to be his wife. He's all I could ever hope for in a man," says Deborah, 30.

And Ron, 23, confides: "Deborah is the girl of my dreams come to life. She's my little lucky charm. I'll always love her."

"I tower over her sizewise — but our love for each other is bigger than both of us. She's full of love and our life together couldn't be happier. I feel like the luckiest man alive!"

Deborah, who uses a wheelchair, was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, a rare disease that causes stunted growth and brittle

## 'Our Love's Bigger Than Both of Us!'

bones. She can break her ribs just by sneezing or coughing, and as a child she had to have 12 major operations.

"When I was born, the doctors told my parents that they should not get their hopes up about me surviving," she told The ENQUIRER. "They also said that if I did live, I'd probably be a vegetable."

"Well, my husband says I'm his little tomato — so maybe they were right about the vegetable! But they were wrong on everything else. I'm living a great life!"

The happy couple met

when Deborah's sister took her out to a bar in their hometown of Altoona, Pa., one night and Ron was there, playing pool.

"It was love at first sight for both of us," she said. "For me it was like a miracle. We talked until the wee hours of the morning."

They were married on Sept. 10, 1982 — and their lives have been filled with bliss ever since. Deborah says Ron treats her like a tiny princess.

"When we go to the grocery store, he carries me in like an eggshell and puts me in the cart."

"Then he puts the groceries in the cart with me. People walk by and smile."

"At home I do all the cooking. Ron helps if there's something I can't reach on the shelves or if something is too heavy for me to lift, like a gallon of milk."

"And he's such a romantic. He writes love notes for me and leaves them around the house where I can find them, like in the kitchen where he makes breakfast before he leaves in the morning."

Deborah works at a local company, making appointments by telephone for vacuum cleaner salesmen. Ron goes to business school in the mornings, then joins his wife at work later in the day, also making calls.

"Ron is so protective," Deborah confided. "At work, he'll tell me, 'Take a break, Deb, you're working too hard.' And at night when I'm tired, he carries me to bed. Then he climbs in bed with me and studies his business books. But he'll keep one eye on me to make sure I'm all right. I always tell him he's too protective, but I love the attention."

"His love makes me feel warm all over."

Said Ron: "I love Deborah more than anything in the world. She has a positive outlook on life. She doesn't worry about her problems, so that makes any other problems we might have seem minor. We always work things out because we love each other so much. I don't know what I'd do without her!"

— MARIAN MILLER



**TINY TREASURE:** 172-lb. hubby Ron Galat, 23, totes his 30-year-old wife Deborah, who suffers from rare brittle bone disease, osteogenesis imperfecta.



**BASKET FULL OF LOVE:** When the Galats go to the supermarket, Deborah rides in the shopping cart along with the family groceries.



# Dwarfs Little people tell of their concerns

From page 1A

Motor City LPA chapter and Mrs. Pouliot, 31, is in charge of registration for the three-day convention. Both also will work on the national LPA convention, to be held in Dearborn this July.

"My parents helped start LPA with Billy Barty (the comedian)," said Mrs. Pouliot, who grew up in Los Angeles. "All my family are LPs, so I've been in the group all my life. All Roger's family are average-size, so he didn't join LPA till later."

IN A world of big people, the Pouliots stand out wherever they go. Second glances and uneasy smiles often come their way, but they're not the ones who feel uncomfortable about their stature.

"I've never felt like a freak, though it wasn't that long ago that people looked at us that way. I can do as much as the next person, and I don't want anyone to feel sorry for me," Mrs. Pouliot said.

"If I feel people are uneasy, I say 'hi' to calm them down, to show that I talk and I'm not from another planet," said Pouliot, who is 4 feet, 1½ inches tall.

"When we walk through a mall, little kids will follow us and we play with them. We walk down one aisle, they walk down another, then we'll stop in mid-aisle and wait to see how long it takes them to double-back and see what happened to us."

HE LAUGHS good-naturedly and says he wishes parents would explain that dwarfs are simply short people, rather than reprimand a finger-pointing child or ignore such curi-

osity. "Parents can say, 'They're little people, the ones who make the tall people tall,'" said Pouliot.

Actually, those who stare at the Pouliots probably don't realize they are looking at a celebrity.

Mrs. Pouliot, whose height is 3 feet, 11½ inches, is in the movies. She played one of the Ewoks in the movie *Return of the Jedi*, appeared in the film *Under the Rainbow* and was on a televised Bob Hope special.

"I was a word-processor for a law firm in L.A. and did some entertainment for fun," said Mrs. Pouliot. "I didn't go after acting jobs because there are LPs who make their living doing that and I didn't want to take away from them."

ENTERTAINMENT jobs always have been a natural for LPs, she said, noting that her parents once played pygmies in a Tarzan film.

"But I look down upon working in the circus," noted Mrs. Pouliot. "I refuse to be stereotyped like that. As each day goes by, we're proving ourselves as attorneys, doctors and other professionals, and are being recognized for our mental capacities."

"Even in the entertainment field, LPs are trying not to be typecast in comic roles."

"LPs were court jesters in the 18th century. Black people complain they were sold as slaves. Well, we were just given away."

THE COUPLE met at an LPA national convention in 1983 and married the next year. Mrs. Pouliot is a law firm billing clerk and her husband is a machine shop electrician.

Since many corporations with gov-

ernment contracts must hire a certain percentage of handicapped workers, Pouliot is applying for a state handicapped classification to see if it will help advance him at work. But the pair don't use handicapped license plates.

"All my friends were tall until I got involved in LPA," said Pouliot, a native Detroiter. "I went to Lutheran High East and I did everything in gym class, but I never could compete on a school team. My father was a swim coach and the saddest part, for me, was knowing I could never swim for my dad."

Pouliot, who wears clothes sized slightly under a man's small, does all his own tailoring. He even altered a tuxedo for his wedding.

MRS. POULIOT buys "student sizes" in department stores and has them altered. Her Size 2 shoes are ordered from a California specialty shop.

Ordinary activities present some problems, but the couple manages.

"Grocery shopping is not fun," explained Mrs. Pouliot. "I make it a point to wear pants because I usually have to climb the shelves. I went to one store that has overly big push-baskets so you can get more stuff in it, and I couldn't see where I was steering that sucker."

They drive cars with extensions on the brake and gas pedals, and they hang artwork and mirrors low on the wall. Their apartment closets have extension racks to make hanging clothes easier.

IF THEY socialize with taller people, they drink less alcohol because of their lower body weight.



**A**S WEDDING PICTURES go, the photographs that Dr. Steven Kopits proudly spreads out on a table in his Baltimore clinic are traditional and—at first glance—unremarkable. The bride, clad in a full-length white gown, is radiant and beautiful as she walks down the aisle on the arm of her handsome bridegroom, cuts the wedding cake and celebrates the joyous occasion.

Then Kopits hands me another set of pictures—photographs of a deformed dwarf child. This was the bride, Ellen Highland, before 85 hours of surgery. In 22 separate operations, Dr. Kopits rebuilt her from the ground up and assured a future for a woman who will never grow more than 40 inches tall.

"This," says Kopits, gesturing to the two sets of photographs, "is what my life and work is all about. If Ellen had not sought help, she probably would be dead by now or at best paralyzed with severe deformities. Now she can live a totally normal life."

The Hungarian-born Kopits, 49, is thought to be the only physician in the world who devotes himself entirely to the orthopedic problems of dwarfs, employing his surgical skills to prevent and correct the often severe bone deformities that cause progressive crippling in many forms of genetic dwarfism. Without skilled surgery, many dwarfs are condemned to lives of pain. Some die, often in their teens or 20s, from respiratory and other complications.

"Little people have to overcome an adversity that we can hardly fathom," Kopits says in his softly accented English. "When I first began studying dwarfism, I found a group of patients who were totally neglected, where the level of medical knowledge was abysmally low. Now I'm frantically trying to bring their treatment up to par with the rest of medicine."

In a society that often equates tallness with brains, authority and physical attractiveness, being extremely short can be a serious handicap. The characters portrayed by America's most successful dwarf actors—Herve Villechaize, formerly of *Fantasy Island*, and Billy Barty, a TV personality—are video extensions of traditional dwarf roles as comic or cute foils for lead characters.

The country's estimated 25,000 dwarfs are among the most visible members of society due to their stature; yet, ironically, they remain one of the least known.

Ernie and Dolores Ott, a dwarf couple with two young children, live in Wheaton, Md. Their experiences are typical. "Since childhood and for the



Dr. Steven Kopits surrounded by friends and patients at a recent Little People of America convention in Columbia, Md.

**I**n a society that often equates tallness with physical attractiveness and other positive attributes, being extremely short can be a serious handicap

# A Doctor Fights For The Little People

next 20 years, people would ask me seriously when I was going to join the circus," recalls Ernie Ott, who holds an M.B.A. degree in finance from Duke University and works as a financial analyst for IBM. "You are constantly reminded you are different, and it's an incredible obstacle for some."

Steven Kopits and his longtime associate, Diane Davis, hear such things almost daily from patients and their families, who come from all over the U.S. and 33 foreign countries. In 15

years, Kopits has performed 2500 operations on dwarfs, often using techniques that he pioneered. His surgical schedule is booked for the next three years. Despite his 80-hour work weeks, there is never enough time to accomplish everything. Dr. Kopits and Davis, a nurse, strive to provide the finest care possible for their patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

He makes a special effort to hold clinics at national and regional meetings of Little People of America and

even schedules clinical consultations at airports when he has layovers between planes. His salary as an associate professor at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is less than what he could earn in private practice. He gives patients his home telephone number and invites them to call anytime.

"There is a saying that a physician should not become emotionally involved with patients," he observes. "I don't think you can be a good physician un-

*continued*

BY MICHAEL SATCHELL



## LITTLE PEOPLE/continued

less you become emotionally involved. I have had a medical colleague describe me as an oddball who treats weirdos. That's how some people regard dwarfs, but I am totally, utterly captivated by these little people and their courage."

Kopits' involvement with little people began in 1968 when he was chief pediatric orthopedist at Johns Hopkins. Called to the emergency room to examine a 3-year-old boy who had been paralyzed after a slap in the face from his father, Kopits discovered that the child was a dwarf—a fact unknown to the parents. Soon after, Kopits dropped by a Baltimore convention of Little People of America and was touched by the sight of some two-dozen dwarfs—many disabled—hobbling and shuffling around on crutches and in wheelchairs.

"It had a big emotional impact," he remembers. "I thought, in this day of modern medicine, how can this be?" Delving into medical textbooks left him even more disturbed because there were few answers and little information of real value. Kopits began seeking out dwarf patients as he explored and perfected new surgical techniques, accumulating a body of research that he hopes to publish.

A group of supporters also launched the Little People's Research Fund, headquartered at Baltimore's St. Joseph Hospital. Says Peggy Albert, the research fund's executive director: "Every week I get calls from desperate parents with horror stories about what's happening to their children. A mother from Georgia called recently—she has an 8-year-old dwarf daughter—and told me that their doctor was trying to cure the child's bowed legs by having them broken and reset each year. It's tragic how much ignorance remains on this subject."

Two basic conditions cause dwarfism. So-called pituitary dwarfs lack growth hormones, and they remain tiny. In the past, these well-proportioned but short-statured persons were known as "mid-gets," but this term is now regarded as insulting. Growth hormones have helped eliminate much pituitary dwarfism.

The most common cause of dwarfism is genetic mutations that cause bones to form and grow improperly, resulting in disproportionate bodies. There are more than 80 different syndromes responsible for these bone dysplasias. The condition is often accompanied by severe bowing of the legs, hip problems, clubfeet and problems with the heart, spine and respiratory system. These so-called genetic dwarfs are the focus of Dr. Kopits' work. Their parents tend to be of normal size, incidentally.

At 8 a.m. on a recent Monday, I watch Kopits operate on Stephen Hatch, 15, who lives in American Fork, near Provo, Utah. Stephen has pseudo-achon-

droplasia. His head and torso are normally proportioned but his legs are stunted and bowed and his arms are short.

"When Stephen was 11, we took him to a Little People's convention in Reno and met Dr. Kopits," says his mother, Beth Hatch. "We watched a girl who was as straight as a stick and was actually dancing. Dr. Kopits said the girl had been like Stephen before he had operated on her."

Kopits had realigned Stephen's hips two weeks earlier. The next task was to straighten his legs. This Monday, the goal is to straighten Stephen's right leg, which takes eight hours. Before setting the hips and legs in a new plaster cast, Kopits invites me to examine the two legs. The right one is now discernibly straighter—and also about three inches longer.

The next day's schedule has Dr. Kopits booked to see patients from Maryland, Texas, Alabama, West Germany and Israel. Pat Hutson, who has traveled from Bonn, West Germany, with her daughter, says of Kopits: "He's our child's link to a more hopeful world. He will give her a future."

Gordon and Virginia Hendrickson of Rochester, N.Y., have brought their 16-year-old daughter Sheri to Baltimore to see Kopits.

"She's been examined by six specialists," explains Mrs. Hendrickson. "They're baffled. They don't know what to do, and they can't help Sheri. She's been taking 10 codeines a day for the pain, and the pills aren't helping. We heard about Dr. Kopits, and we felt this was our only chance."

After a lengthy examination of the girl, Kopits is clearly touched. Her pains, he explains, are probably not orthopedic in origin but may be related to her dwarfism.

"I'm just a poor orthopedist from East Baltimore," Kopits says with a wry smile, "but I want you to know that I care about you, and I'm going to do everything in my power to help you get well." He then gives the Hendricksons his home telephone number, tells them to call if there are any problems overnight and arranges to have their daughter admitted to the hospital for tests. As the family leaves his office, Kopits bends his lanky frame down, hugs his new patient and kisses her on the cheek. She is clearly smitten.

Kopits watches the family leave and shakes his head. "Six doctors, and none could help her," he observes. "It's tragic really. All the time, I see the desperation of good physicians who can't do anything for these patients. That is what keeps me going."

For more information, write to: Peggy Albert, Little People's Research Fund, St. Joseph Hospital, Dept. P, 80 Sister Pierre Drive, Towson, Md. 21204.